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23 February 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting of President's Committee on Stockpiling, 20 February 1962

1. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Edward A. McDermott, Acting Director, Office of Emergency Planning. Mr. McDermott summarized the position that various agencies had taken last October regarding a request from OEP, dated 26 September 1961, for views on the declassification of 76 stockpile materials. Much to my surprise, Mr. McDermott stated that the CIA answer had been a qualified "no". I corrected the record by pointing out that the CIA Director's reply of 3 October had stated that CIA was not "...in a position to comment on the release or continued classification of information on individual items of the stockpile." The Director stated that we preferred to defer to the member agencies of the Interdepartmental Materials Advisory Committee, who had a direct responsibility in the stockpile program.

2. I also quoted from a 9 September 1961 letter from the Acting Director, CIA to the Director, Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, which stated that we would very much like to have stockpile information on the USSR and that the classified information on US stockpiles could be of at least some limited intelligence value to the USSR. The Acting Director went on to say, however, that we did not consider the matter important enough from our viewpoint to take a stand against declassification if there were good and sufficient reasons for doing so from a policy point of view.

3. The discussion then turned to the question of declassifying stockpile information. There was unanimous agreement that actual stockpile data should be declassified and that information on the location of stockpiles should not be declassified. No final decision was made on whether to declassify information on stockpiles objectives. The consensus seemed to be that past objectives could be declassified because they were out of date and rather meaningless, yet would assist the Symington Committee in its investigation. The question of declassifying future and more realistic objectives was left open.

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4. It was announced that a Study Group would convene on February 23 to begin work on a draft report to the Committee, to be submitted by March 10, so that the Committee's principals can approve a final report by March 19, the deadline set by the President. A working outline for the Study Group was passed out.



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